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SECRET, CRIMINAL DATA, AND COMMENTS:

For the RI Main Index: Wolfgang *FFAUNDLER

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SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3828
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

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FIELD INFORMATION REPORT

GRADING OF SOURCE: A: Completely reliable. B: Usually reliable. C: Really reliable. D: Not usually reliable. E: Not reliable. (Applied to sources of doubtful honesty or loyalty, regardless of their competence). F: Reliability cannot be judged. (Applied to untested or insufficiently tested sources).

APPRAISAL OF CONTENT: 1: Confirmed by other independent and reliable sources. 2: Probably true. 3: Possibly true. 4: Doubtful. 5: Probably false. 6: Cannot be judged.

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COUNTRY Austria/Italy

REPORT NO. EAV - 7584

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SUBJECT Background of the Wolfgang
Pfaundler Arrest

DATE OF REPORT 4 August 1961

NO. PAGES 2

REFERENCES EAV - 7540, 7314, 7557
CS-3482,753
CS-3473,302

DATE OF INFO February - July 1961

PLACE & DATE ACQ. Austria, Vienna (3 August 1961)

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE With contacts in Tirolean extremist circles (F).
Appraisal of Content: 3.

Requested

1. Upon the discovery in late February or early March 1961 of the weapons and explosives cache in his Innsbruck apartment, Wolfgang Pfaundler was immediately arrested and questioned. After a short period of time he was released, mainly on the testimony of his doctor, who maintained that Pfaundler was not physically able to stand the rigors of imprisonment. Almost immediately prior to the discovery of the cache, Pfaundler had been operated on for the removal of a stomach ulcer. Several months before this he had another operation, reportedly for a gall bladder condition. The official reason for Pfaundler's release, therefore, was medical. A short time after his release, however, Pfaundler began to make statements around Innsbruck to the effect that the real reason for his release was the fact that he knew too much and that Austrian officials might be embarrassed by the information which would be uncovered in the course of a prosecution.
2. Another factor complicating the prosecution is the following: Three persons were present when the cache was first discovered in Pfaundler's apartment, one of whom was an Italian. Then an anonymous tipster, obviously Italian, reported the find to the Innsbruck police. After his release, Pfaundler denied having known anything about the cache, although previously he was considered to have tacitly admitted his guilt by his silence under interrogation. Pfaundler now (July 1961) maintains that the cache was planted by the Italians to provoke the Austrians. To resolve the matter, the Innsbruck police maintain that an Italian representative should take part in the trial--preferably the man who was present when the cache was discovered, or the one who informed the police about it.¹

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3. Believed to be without foundation is the rumor that Pfaundler is being protected by several high Austrian officials who are afraid that their own involvement in terrorist actions would be revealed in the course of Pfaundler's prosecution. It is thought by some that Pfaundler himself is the originator of the rumor. Observers of the scene state that anyone who could be embarrassed by Pfaundler's revelations is already recognized as being attached to the South Tirolean extremists. Among such persons are Innsbruck People's Party chairman Aloys Oberhammer, and Eduard Widmoser of the Berg Isel Bund, who pays Pfaundler a salary. One person who might possibly be embarrassed because of his relationship with Pfaundler is State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Ludwig Steiner. Steiner and Pfaundler have been on Du terms since the early post-war years. They are, however, wide apart in their political beliefs and it is considered quite certain that Steiner is strongly opposed to the activities of the Tirolean extremists. As a rising politician with no firm base of support, Steiner, however, could be hurt by any exposure of his association with a man as irresponsible as Pfaundler.

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Source Comment: Since no Italian in his right mind would enter Austria on such a mission, the case is stalemated.